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New York

President: The Hon. Julian R. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda items 60 and 10 (*continued*)

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Report of the Secretary-General (A/58/323)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/58/1)

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): At the outset I associate myself with the statement made this morning by the representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

In his introduction to the reports on the work of the Organization and on follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals, the Secretary-General begins by referring to the abominable attack of 19 August on the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad. While the attack caused the loss of the lives of dedicated servants of the Organization and nationals of Iraq, as the Secretary-General rightly puts it in his report on the Millennium Development Goals, it was

> "a direct challenge to the vision of global ... security rooted in the Charter of the United Nations and articulated in the Millennium Declaration." (*A/58/323, para. 2*).

The blue flag and Blue Helmets have always signified hope, protection and security. But in this world of growing international tension the norm seems to be eroding. As we reflect on the events of 19 August, therefore, and on the work of the Organization in general, perhaps we need to go further and look critically at the underlying factors. For merely condemning this attack — which we should do — might not prevent a recurrence elsewhere.

The very name of our Organization denotes collectivism. It stems from the lesson learned that when we are divided we are vulnerable, and that our diverse national interests can be best served through an international order that is mutually beneficial.

Clearly, we have long realized that divisions in the United Nations have far-reaching consequences. But should agreement persist for the sake of unity, even when such agreement might lead to action that is inconsistent with the Charter? Those are some of the questions that perhaps need to be borne in mind as we reflect further, and when the proposed panel of eminent personalities on United Nations reform begins its important work.

The Millennium Declaration values include that of a world free from fear, and to this end world leaders have committed themselves to maximize efforts to prevent conflict. In this connection, we look forward to the Secretary-General's report on the prevention of armed conflict, to be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

It is imperative to stress that, where conflict has occurred, the importance of timely peacekeeping operations, commensurate with the magnitude of the

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task at hand, cannot be overemphasized. My delegation therefore shares the Secretary-General's concern that there was greater enthusiasm for discussing the Brahimi report than for implementing its recommendations. Peacekeeping is the collective responsibility of all Member States, irrespective of their geographical location.

The Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and sustainable development in Africa contains recommendations that remain valid. We can effectively address conflict only by looking at the causes comprehensively. In this connection, the African Union, through its Peace and Security Council, which will soon begin its activities, needs the assistance of the international community and enhanced cooperation with the United Nations with a view to strengthening conditions in which peace and development can thrive.

In the same vein, post-conflict peace-building is as important as peacekeeping. It is during the post-conflict, not the peacekeeping, period that the causes of conflict are addressed. This calls for closer coordination between Security Council and the Economic and Social Council to address sustainable development in post-conflict situations.

In the area of disarmament, the United Nations has put in place the necessary agencies to oversee disarmament. These agencies must be well equipped and allowed to carry out their work objectively.

In Africa, disarmament should include the problem of small arms and light weapons. The loss of millions of lives in conflict in some parts of Africa is the result, not of weapons of mass destruction, but of small arms, which none of the affected African countries produce.

We live in an interdependent world where developmental problems are connected to security challenges. The Millennium Declaration comprehensively addresses all the problems facing mankind, because we cannot pursue one problem at the expense of the others. Thus, we cannot effectively combat terrorism while failing to respect for human rights and fundamental freedom. We cannot strive for sustainable development while neglecting security challenges.

Namibia believes that gender equality and the empowerment of women is crucial if we are to meet the Millennium Development Goals. The Beijing Platform for Action comprehensively addresses ways and means of bringing about the equal participation of women. The full participation of women in political and economic decision-making is key in bringing about gender equality, which in turn will contribute to poverty eradication and enhance social justice. The participation of women in political decision-making is one area in which Member States need but political will, rather than outside measures.

Namibia welcomes the initiatives of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) aimed at helping low-income producers in developing countries find markets for their products, and urges the international community to work to enable UNIFEM to reach more women, especially in rural areas.

In the same vein, as we maximize our efforts to create a world fit for children, we must pay attention to the children who are caught up in conflict, as well as to the increasing number of AIDS orphans. In this regard, we welcome the United Nations Children's Fund and the African Union initiative aimed at prioritizing investment in the future of African children.

Global partnership is dependent upon cooperation. In this context, the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus will give impetus to the realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

In the context of sustainable development, Namibia attaches great importance to the promotion of the equitable utilization of oceans resources and the protection and preservation of the marine environment. In this regard Namibia underlines the essential need for capacity-building to ensure that developing countries are able to benefit from the resources of the oceans and seas. It is therefore vital that a voluntary trust fund be established, in accordance with part VII of the Fish Stocks Agreement, to provide financial assistance to developing States parties to the Agreement to assist in its implementation.

As the Secretary-General clearly stated in paragraph 72 of his report (A/58/323):

> "For the first time in human history, we have the resources, the knowledge and the expertise to eradicate human poverty — and to do so within the lifetime of a child born at the time when the Millennium Declaration was adopted".

We concur with his assertion, based on the fact that, while the Global Fund to Fight AIDS,

Tuberculosis and Malaria still falls short of the $10.5 billion required annually by 2005 to fund global HIV/AIDS programmes, $800 billion is being spent annually on armaments.

Let me conclude by stating that, just as we need to take a long look at the existing architecture of international institutions, so, too, we should look at what we are or are not doing to make them function effectively. After all, the United Nations can only be as strong and effective as we the Member States want it to be.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) *(spoke in Russian)*: Most of the present day challenges and threats are global by their nature and therefore presuppose the need for a collective response based on the comprehensive regard and respect for the legitimate interests of all members of the international community, while strictly observing international legal rules and making comprehensive use of the potential of various multilateral universal and regional-level institutions.

The United Nations Secretary-General's report submitted to the Assembly justly noted that the past year has been extremely difficult for the Organization, probably the most severe endurance test of recent times. But at the same time, it demonstrated the potential flexibility of the United Nations — for all its shortcomings — to adjust to changes, taking into account new challenges and global processes, while adhering to its purposes and principles as they were set out by its founders.

The Russian Federation shares the United Nations Secretary-General's conclusion that a strong and effective Organization is an indispensable tool for regulating international relations in the face of real and potential threats on the basis of the United Nations Charter and the rules of international law. As President Vladimir Putin said from this rostrum, this is our choice and our strategic position. However, as the Secretary-General rightly observes, the Organization's strength and efficiency depend directly on the Member States' active support for its policy and their readiness to use the United Nations to reconcile competing national interests.

It is evident that during the past few years the Organization has increasingly been forced to confront entirely new problems, to face different, but no less serious threats. Therefore, like any complicated system, it needs improving. In this context, we share the Secretary-General's opinion about the urgent need, at the present time, to take "a most careful look" at reforming the entire United Nations system, including its main organs, the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Trusteeship Council. We support his intention to create a group of eminent persons to come up, by the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, with recommendations about reforming the above-mentioned mechanisms of the Organization. We are ready to take an active part in developing these proposals.

In doing so, it is important first of all to sort things out and to understand which of the United Nations structures and mechanisms are still efficient and productive, and which have already fulfilled their missions and are no longer in demand. That is why we have to be very cautious when interfering in the fabric and mechanisms of the Organization's functioning and to assume that any measures aimed at modernizing its instruments must be based on thorough analysis and accurate calculation.

The Russian Federation is convinced that the central role of the United Nations should be comprehensively consolidated by means of improving the international legal tools and by creating a relevant strategy on the basis of those tools.

The process was begun at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, which supported the Russian initiative and adopted General Assembly resolution 57/145, entitled, "Responding to global threats and challenges". We assume that active efforts in this context should be continued and that particular emphasis should be given to developing effective practical measures.

In his address to the current Assembly session, President Vladimir Putin suggested the adoption of a new resolution, which would specify further steps to be taken by the international community in order to counter global threats and challenges. Its key elements would include the goal of closer interaction between States in this effort, based on a comprehensive and efficient strategy aimed at resolving specific problems, including international terrorism, regional conflicts and non-sustainable development.

We believe that active practical efforts in this direction can boost the authority of the United Nations

in real terms, and help correctly define priorities in the reform process. We also hope that the high-level panel of experts, which is being created by the Secretary-General, will significantly contribute to this task. We call upon all States to support this General Assembly draft resolution.

We fully support the Secretary-General's efforts intended to strengthen the principle of the supremacy of law as a basic element of today's international relations. For Russia, this is an imperative. We can see that international law is going through complex processes affecting at times the very foundations of the international legal order.

We could cite as examples the rapid development of international criminal justice during the past few years, the conditions and limits of the use of force in the context of the fight against international terrorism, developments in international human rights law and the strengthening of the non-proliferation regimes for weapons of mass destruction.

In this vein we note as meriting our attention the Secretary-General's proposal to reflect on how we could, through joint actions, effectively address the problems that cause certain States to think of themselves as particularly vulnerable, which, in turn, prompts them to take unilateral measures.

We also believe it fundamentally important that the United Nations should, in practice, become the basis for the global anti-terrorist coalition. We note the role of the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council, which ought to become a practical instrument for effectively combating the terrorist threat.

An important agenda item of the United Nations continues to be the improvement of peacekeeping mechanisms. The United Nations must be able to carry out a more expeditious and effective deployment of peacekeeping operations and, where needed, peace enforcement operations. Of course, this must be done in strict conformity with the United Nations Charter, which clearly defines the key role of the Security Council at all stages of a peacekeeping operation, from its authorization and elaboration of its mandate right through to its conclusion.

What is particularly important in this context is not to permit circumvention of Security Council authority, particularly in situations which raise the issue of the use of force on behalf of the international community. In the process, military measures must be agreed upon and must be both reasonable and sufficient.

As the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Putin, emphasized, our country is prepared to intensify its participation both in operations conducted under United Nations auspices and in coalition operations authorized by the Security Council. We support the importance underlined by the Secretary-General of insuring continuity in the peacekeeping cycle in United Nations activities in "hot spots", from preventive diplomacy and the prevention of armed conflicts, to establishing and maintaining peace and post-conflict peaceful construction.

We are pleased to note that over the past year the United Nations has achieved a measure of success in the settlement of regional conflicts. The examples of these operations in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and a number of other crisis regions clearly demonstrate a direct link between the maintenance of peace and full socio-economic recovery in conflict-torn countries.

In this context, particular importance should be given to further development of, to quote the Secretary-General, "innovative partnerships" between the United Nations and regional organizations. Positive examples of such cooperation include the Security Council-mandated mission of the European Union in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) operations in Afghanistan; and the deployment of the multinational forces of member countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Liberia, later replaced by a United Nations peacekeeping operation.

The list of present-day threats is certainly not limited to problems of a military, terrorist or similar nature. To a great number of people on the planet, the utmost priority is overcoming the so-called soft threats in the socio-economic sphere, such as continued extreme poverty, income inequality, the spread of infectious diseases and the deterioration of the environment.

We welcome the United Nations trend towards increasing assistance to countries to attain their development goals and implement agreements reached at the recent landmark high-level conferences and

meetings held under United Nations auspices. We support giving the Organization a truly key political mobilizing role in increasing policy coordination in the field of international trade, finance and investment. This requires further strengthening on the basis of the Monterrey Consensus, of the interactions between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, and, finally, taking into account Cancun and the World Trade Organization.

Realizing the great value of the United Nations humanitarian mission, Russia, as President Vladimir Putin had noted, considers this to be a most important political objective of the Organization. Humanitarian crises have lately become particularly complex and multidimensional, which requires us to rethink the entire body of humanitarian assistance work. We agree with the Secretary-General that United Nations activities to implement the results of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, should be intensified.

We also intend to actively work to resolve serious environmental problems. An important stage here was the World Conference on Climate Change, which was recently held in Moscow.

One of the most serious global threats is undoubtedly the spread of such severe diseases as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria and flare-ups of new deadly epidemics, such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). We support the Secretary-General's call for the mobilization of additional financial resources to enhance the effectiveness of international response measures. To this end, we favour the establishment of a global system to monitor and neutralize all dangerous infectious diseases.

The Secretary-General was certainly right when he said at the opening of this session that we stand at a crossroads. Indeed, the world may have changed, but the United Nations must counter all the threats and challenges, both new and old, in their new and dangerous combinations, both hard and soft, because the Organization's goals today are more real and urgent than ever before.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): At the outset, I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and timely reports on the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and on the work of the Organization.

I also associate my country with the statement made by the representative of Peru on behalf of the Rio Group.

In presenting his report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration a little less than a month ago, the Secretary-General, in a commendably earnest and frank manner, warned us of the risks confronting the very essence of our Organization. In his remarks during this year's general debate, he went beyond that, stating that in matters of international peace and security the logic of unilateralism "represents a fundamental challenge to the principles on which, however imperfectly, world peace and stability have rested for the last fifty-eight years" (*A/58/PV.7, p. 3*).

Very appropriately, the Secretary-General drew a parallel between the situation at the moment of the creation of the United Nations and the reality today. The founding fathers of the United Nations were aware that the creation of an Organization such as this — a means for the peaceful resolution of conflict and the promotion of development through concerted action — was the only viable alternative to a world of chaos, which at the time already threatened the very existence of mankind.

The United Nations based itself on the purposes and principles reflected in the San Francisco Charter, not only because of their intrinsic and unquestionable moral and ethical value, but also for the pragmatic reason that they were the only grounds on which it could withstand the test of time.

It is tragic that the values enshrined in the Charter are being challenged by recent international events at a time when continued technological developments have made the consequences of resorting to the use of force more dangerous and destructive, at a time when the ambiguous forces of globalization have made the interdependence of all our nations only more evident.

The moment has come for us to strengthen our commitment to multilateralism and to the principles and values at the core of this Organization. As President Lula da Silva put it in this very hall barely two weeks ago:

> "Our central task is to preserve people from the scourge of war, to negotiate settlements inspired by the principles and objectives of the San Francisco Charter. Let us not place greater trust on military might than on the institutions we

created with the light of reason and the vision of history." (*A/58/PV.7, p. 6*)

Reform of the United Nations has thus become a priority. The Security Council must be strengthened and made more legitimate. Its composition, in particular as concerns its permanent membership, cannot remain unaltered. It can no longer ignore the emergence on the international scene of developing countries that have become actors and often exercise a critical role in promoting the pacific settlement of disputes. Better representation means wider legitimacy.

The Economic and Social Council must be empowered so that it can make its indispensable contribution to the establishment of a fair and just economic order. It is crucial that the Council regain the role bestowed upon it by our Charter. The causes of peace and social and economic development will be better served with an Economic and Social Council that is able to cooperate fully and actively with the Security Council in preventing conflicts and in nation building.

The General Assembly, in turn, as the universal democratic organ that it is, must be reinforced politically so as to guide the work of the Organization overall and rekindle its status as the forum that embodies and gives voice to the principles of the Charter. It has to be more and more involved in the debate and in the determination of solutions to the new challenges facing humanity.

The Millennium Declaration has become a landmark in the United Nations. It embodies the essence of our multilateral efforts in the past decade and clearly points to what must be done in order to build a fair, inclusive and equitable world by 2015.

The review of progress on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration shows, however, mixed results. We should not be defeated by the prospect that, at the current pace, many countries and regions will not be able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. On the contrary, this realization should strengthen our resolve to work together to create the conditions for the international community to intensify efforts and fully achieve those goals. We must pursue them relentlessly in a true spirit of global partnership.

We are grateful for the personal commitment of Secretary-General Kofi Annan in this regard. The international community is indeed fortunate to count on his engagement and leadership.

In Brazil, President Lula da Silva has made the eradication of hunger not only a governmental policy but also a personal one. This is why he has lent his voice to advocating additional funding for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals worldwide. As a token of his commitment, he has made a personal donation to the Secretary-General to be used in efforts towards this aim.

Together with the leaders of India and South Africa, President Lula has invited other statesmen to join this endeavour. We are grateful for the expressions of support received from many of our partners and look forward to working closely with them.

Brazil welcomes the decision taken by the fifty-seventh General Assembly to hold, in 2005, a major event to review progress made in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. This prospect should provide us with the necessary impetus to move more expeditiously from rhetoric to action to fulfil the commitments already agreed upon.

As noted by the Secretary-General in his report, there is a need for stronger international solidarity and responsibility, together with greater respect for decisions reached collectively and greater determination to put them into effect. Implementation is now, and should remain, our primary concern in the coming years.

As the Secretary-General has emphatically stated, history has given us the task of reviewing and reforming this Organization. Never before has the need been so evident. In this connection, Brazil favours the Secretary-General's initiative of convening a high-level panel to make the required recommendations.

In the end, it comes down to better equipping the United Nations — our United Nations — to deal with the challenges of our time, namely the threats to international peace and security, the struggle to bring those most in need out of misery and neglect, the defence of the collective purposes and principles on which the United Nations is based and the promotion of the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, as set out at the memorable Millennium Summit. In supporting the Secretary-General's determined efforts, Brazil remains fully committed to those objectives.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Croatia.

Mr. Drobnjak (Croatia): One has to start the debate with strong praise for the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization. It is a comprehensive and transparent document, one that provides us with a broad picture of all the activities and important work that this Organization has achieved in the course of one year. We appreciate, in particular, the directness of the report of the Secretary-General concerning the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. Such an engaged and results-oriented approach serves as an example for further reporting on the matter. Croatia shares the Secretary-General's opinion about the progress that has been achieved in certain areas of work, as well as his warnings about the shortcomings or the lack of political will that exist in others.

The past year proved to be challenging for the United Nations in more ways than one, especially in the field of peace and security. The war in Iraq profoundly shook the very core of the Organization, testing some of the basic United Nations principles to the limit. If there was one valuable lesson learned from this challenge, it is that we must act efficiently and swiftly in order to strengthen our Organization.

Any comprehensive United Nations reform has to include the reform of the Security Council. For that reason, it is of the utmost importance to resume the negotiations on this issue and to proceed with a stronger political will and an open mind. The strategic importance of the Security Council's reform should outweigh the single political agenda of any Member State. We must also review the functioning of the other major United Nations organs and the relationship between them, leaving no stone unturned. In this regard, we strongly support the Secretary-General in his intention to establish a high-level panel of eminent personalities to provide us with fresh ideas and views on these far-reaching topics. We hope that the high-level panel will commence its work soon, and that its composition will be based as much on proven expertise as on the appropriate regional representation.

The comparative advantages of the United Nations, like those in the field of peacekeeping and peace-building, conflict prevention and peacemaking, should be fully utilized. The world needs this expertise. It needs extensive United Nations knowledge and know-how that can be supplemented by no other international organization, or by any one country. As regional organizations and initiatives are becoming closer partners to the United Nations in the field of maintaining peace and security, their specific knowledge and targeted influence in their respective regions should be further utilized as an added value, and their cooperation with the United Nations additionally strengthened.

The terrorism of the twenty-first century, global in its reach and devastating in its consequences, has shed a new light on the issue of collective security and our collective responsibilities in maintaining international peace and security. The almost universal response of Member States to the Counter-Terrorism Committee's requests is a telling example of how competent the United Nations can be in mobilizing the international community in global action against terrorism. Croatia believes that determined multilateralism is the most efficient weapon in this war, and this Organization continues to be the best possible framework for a long-term anti-terrorism strategy. This strategy, however, must not ignore the basic principles that the United Nations stands for, including full respect for international law, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Disarmament remains a matter of high priority for the international community, in particular as it relates to the threat of weapons of mass destruction. Prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is an issue that goes beyond the scope of disarmament, falling squarely in the field of the fight against terrorism. We fully agree with the Secretary-General in his assessment that there is a concern that nuclear, biological or chemical weapons might be used by State or non-State actors. Croatia fully subscribes to the Secretary-General's opinion that a major weakness of all weapons of mass destruction regimes is their weak enforcement provisions and that this matter deserves review and possible action, some of which should be undertaken within the framework of the United Nations, including the Security Council.

Of equal importance is making further progress in conventional weapons disarmament, which should not be subsumed into or overridden by a narrow focus on certain aspects of the global nexus of disarmament, non-proliferation and security of weapons-related material. We remain concerned by the lack of progress in this field. Small arms and light weapons present a threat to regional stability in some parts of the world of the same magnitude as that of weapons of mass destruction elsewhere.

We have to devote special attention to so-called soft threats posed by environmental problems, contagious diseases, economic dislocation, crime, illegal transborder activities, corruption at various levels and simple poverty. All of these make people more vulnerable, more desperate and prone to radicalism of all sorts. We are still off track in reaching the goals set for primary education, gender equality and child mortality. Fighting global poverty is the most daunting of all problems, because poverty — whether caused by a lack of money, food or perspective — is a breeding ground for the expanding crisis, with unforeseeable consequences for peace and stability. According to the World Bank's *World Development Report 2004*, there is a possibility that the proportion of people living on less than $1 a day will be halved by 2015 if an annual gross domestic product growth of 2.9 per cent is achieved. We should make that goal our priority.

The United Nations must increase its efforts to ensure a smooth transition from the provision of humanitarian assistance to that of development activities in post-conflict situations. Lessons learned in some parts of the world — in South-East Europe, for example — could be utilized and further explored elsewhere, in parts of Africa in particular. We also encourage strengthening the role of the Economic and Social Council and its cooperation with other main United Nations bodies, especially the Security Council. We encourage further increased financing for development, a strong involvement of the private sector, a successful round of trade negotiations and the use of new technologies, such as information and communications technologies, for poverty eradication.

Monitoring progress of the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals at the national, regional and global levels is essential because it shows not only the current state of play, but also what action has to be taken. Therefore, the United Nations Development Group, the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs and the World Bank should continue to strongly cooperate in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, their monitoring, and national and regional reporting.

Global threats necessitate the globalization of the legal order. The strengthening of the international rule of law as a guarantee of international peace and security has been rightly recognized as one of the cornerstones of the implementation of the Millennium Goals. Croatia therefore welcomes the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General and the Organization directed at raising worldwide awareness of the importance of the rule of law. We particularly support new initiatives, such as annual treaty events, which have proven successful at mobilizing Member States to join a number of important legal instruments, which in turn widen and strengthen their reach.

We are witnessing the emergence of a new international legal order. This evolutionary process is probably most pronounced in international criminal and humanitarian law. The beginning of the twenty-first century remains marked by the creation of the International Criminal Court, which is the first example of international criminal adjudication that is permanent and not linked to particular areas, nations or events. We welcome the commencement of its work and feel proud to be an active participant in its creation.

In the area of human rights, democracy and good governance, my delegation welcomes the accelerated ratification of major human rights treaties and deems equally important their effective and comprehensive implementation. In this respect, the United Nations should continue its support in building national capacities in human rights as well as integrating human rights into its own development activities.

We welcome the initiatives and actions that have been taken on strengthening the administration and management of the Organization. All efforts that are made in order to enhance the operational capability and effective functioning of the Organization enjoy our continued support. As a country that fulfils its financial obligation towards the Organization on a regular basis, Croatia is encouraged that the financial situation of the Organization has been showing a tendency towards improvement in the past two years. In order for it to be more efficient and effective in utilizing resources, corresponding steps would need to be taken. We fully support all measures to streamline the work of the Organization so as to ensure that resources and activities are in line with the Organization's priorities set out in the Millennium Declaration.

The general debate at the beginning of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly underlined the importance of our Organization. There is a need not to elaborate on this issue further, but to concentrate on the real work. We have the structure, experience and knowledge in the United Nations that should be

improved through comprehensive reforms, but is already sufficient to enable us to act decisively in all the fields where such an action is dearly needed.

In conclusion, I would like to inform the Assembly that Croatia, as an applicant country for European Union membership, aligns itself with the European Union's statement delivered this morning on this agenda item by the Union's Italian presidency.

Mr. Hakeem (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to join preceding speakers in thanking the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization. I also wish to commend the great effort made in drafting the report, which is comprehensive and accurate in its account of international developments last year and of the role of the Organization in addressing issues of peace and security and social and economic questions. In particular, I commend the report's realism in its early reference to the fact that this has been a trying year for the United Nations in the area of peace and security.

Any observer of the international situation will note that the primary reason for this is the non-adherence of many countries to the principles and purposes of the United Nations and their lack of respect for decisions of international legitimacy. Recent events in various parts of the world have shown that there is no place for unilateral action outside the framework of international legitimacy in addressing such current problems as terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and even the resort to unilateral action on the basis of self-defence. The latter undermines the principle of collective security upon which the Charter of the United Nations is founded.

The report reviews the tragic situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and the persistent efforts made by the Secretary-General and the Quartet to resume the peace process. Unfortunately, despite all those intense efforts and good offices, Israel still flouts the decisions of international legitimacy. Israel has always taken such a stance in its international relations regarding its occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories.

This stems first of all from the reluctance of the international community to compel Israel to implement United Nations resolutions. That has subjected the Palestinian people to increasing daily suffering and has encouraged Israel to persist in its efforts more tenaciously, as witnessed by its military aggression yesterday on the sisterly Syrian Arab Republic.

Terrorism represents a threat to international peace and security. Our sense of security in the world is being eroded by that phenomenon. It is thus imperative that we firmly condemn terrorism in all its forms, and Saudi Arabia has expressed its position on the matter. My country has also supported all Security Council resolutions related to terrorism. We have fully cooperated in efforts to implement international measures to combat terrorism, and have acceded to international treaties in that connection. Here, we should emphasize that any international effort to combat terrorism, however effective, will not be able to eliminate the phenomenon completely if it is treated apart from its root causes, and motivations, and the means by which its is spread. Therefore, circumstances that produce a political, economic and social environment conducive to extremist and terrorist trends require our full attention.

Despite the fact that 25 years have elapsed since the holding of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, it is regrettable that the international commitment to acceding to international treaties is still weak. My country, Saudi Arabia, is making every effort to make the Middle East region free from all weapons of mass destruction. Despite the adoption since 1974 of yearly resolutions aimed at making the Middle East a zone free from weapons of mass destruction, that objective still eludes us, because of Israel's refusal to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and submit its nuclear facilities to the international safeguards regime. My country therefore appeals to the international community to take the measures necessary to transform the Middle East region into a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction. That would greatly contribute to the establishment of peace and stability in the region and throughout the world.

Concerning item 60, on follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit, my delegation agrees completely with the Secretary-General in his report on implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/58/323). Any observer of international events can see that — in addition to the key challenges faced by the world today in the form of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction — the main challenge emphasized by heads of State or Government in the Millennium Declaration is making

globalization a positive force for the benefit of all peoples of the world. The Millennium Declaration included a series of time-bound Development Goals. However, the Secretary-General referred in his report to the uneven way in which these Goals are being implemented given the many differences among regions and countries, or even within countries. My delegation still believes that implementing most of the Millennium Goals by 2015 will be likely only with the political will of the international community and with collective action to implement our international objectives.

The report of the Secretary-General on the Millennium Declaration refers to HIV/AIDS, which is the most prominent threat faced by humanity in the twenty-first century. Based on the great importance that Saudi Arabia attaches to this issue, my Government has worked side by side with the international community since the twenty-sixth special session, held in late June 2001. We have sought to implement the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, because we believe that it is important to stand with the international community and support it in confronting this epidemic. Saudi Arabia has also contributed $10 million to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. My country has also participated in conferences held at the local, regional and international levels to contribute to limiting the spread of AIDS.

We still have a lot to do and many challenges to meet. I would like to emphasize that my country, Saudi Arabia, is determined to participate seriously in our collective work to address these challenges. I would also emphasize the great importance that Saudi Arabia attaches to the United Nations and to its pivotal role in maintaining peace, security and stability and in achieving development. We underline here that the implementation of all these objectives should be in keeping with the principles of the Charter and the resolutions of the Organization.

Mr. Rastam (Malaysia): My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports on the work of the Organization and on implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, as contained in documents A/58/1 and A/58/323, respectively. We also thank him for his statement of 23 September 2003 (see A/58/PV.7). We commend the Secretary-General for the innovation and change that he has effected in the work of the Organization as well as for his determination to bring about further changes to meet present and future challenges. We also commend the Secretary-General for his strong commitment to multilateralism. We share his view that the United Nations can play a central role in resolving many issues of common concern to all nations. We concur, to a large extent, with the Secretary-General's bold and candid analysis of the current global situation. Like him, we have concerns over the future of the United Nations and of multilateralism. These, we believe, should be addressed by the General Assembly at this session.

My delegation also wishes to congratulate you, Mr. President, for your wise decision to continue to have these two interrelated agenda items considered in a joint debate in the interest of ensuring efficiency in the work of the General Assembly. We view this as a good beginning to our work during this session of the General Assembly. We fully support you in your effort to achieve the goals that you have outlined on several occasions. We are confident that, under your presidency, the General Assembly will play its rightful role: to assist the Secretary-General and the Organization to meet the challenges outlined in the Secretary-General's reports. My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Clearly, the United Nations has faced tremendous challenges during the past year. Our collective commitment to a multilateralism centred around the United Nations has been severely tested. Many people, including the Secretary- General, have advocated the need for urgent change and reform in the United Nations. Malaysia welcomes such a move. Malaysia fully supports the proposed establishment of the high-level panel of eminent personalities, as announced by the Secretary-General during the general debate on 23 September 2003. We join the Non-Aligned Movement in expressing that support. The Movement had discussed the Secretary-General's proposal at its Ministerial Meeting, held in New York on 26 September 2003. Malaysia will work with the Non-Aligned Movement and others to offer our views and suggestions to the Secretary-General to ensure the successful outcome of this exercise.

The Secretary-General has asked whether the set of rules drawn up by the founding fathers of the United Nations, which have governed the conduct of relations between States over all these years, are still valid, or

whether they need to be radically changed. We agree that change is required. But change should not be made at the expense of principles. Malaysia firmly believes in the need to strengthen multilateralism, as embodied in the United Nations. It is clear that no country can act alone to resolve problems that concern the international community. The situation in Iraq is a clear example. The United Nations has to be given a central role in resolving issues relating to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the promotion of international cooperation.

During the recent general debate, heads of State, Prime Ministers, Ministers and heads of delegation repeatedly reaffirmed their commitment to multilateralism. It is imperative that we now work, during this session of the General Assembly, to develop a renewed sense of purpose for the United Nations, so as to enable the Secretary-General and his colleagues to carry out their tasks and responsibilities with greater vigour and confidence. We also need to revive public confidence in the United Nations.

My delegation maintains its conviction that the Security Council must be reformed and restructured in order to promote democratic practices in international relations and reflect international geopolitical realities in the current membership of the United Nations. Besides the question of increased membership, the rights and privileges accorded to members, in particular the veto power vested in the permanent members, must be seriously addressed in the reform process. Malaysia believes that very serious efforts must be made to effect genuine reform of the Security Council as soon as possible.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is highlighted in the Secretary-General's report as a major threat to international peace and security. We share the sentiment of the Secretary-General that we should not differentiate between "good" and "bad" proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It is disturbing to my delegation that the prevailing international security situation is being used to give emphasis only to vertical proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. That trend is indeed incompatible with the agreements reached at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Malaysia agrees that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction must be curtailed. Such weapons must be eventually eliminated, without discrimination, if we are sincere in our resolve to create a peaceful and secure world free from the threat of weapons of mass destruction. But we cannot confuse the issues. The role of the United Nations in this regard cannot be ignored.

The situation in the Middle East remains an important issue of international peace and security for the United Nations. We appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General, the Quartet and other peace brokers in the region to revive the peace process through the implementation of the road map. We encourage the Secretary-General to continue with his efforts. Israel must be made to demonstrate firm commitment to the road map and to announce its acceptance of the two-State solution, end its occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories, cease military operations and human rights violations against the Palestinians and against its neighbours, such as the air strike against Syria yesterday, and terminate its settler colonialism activities and the construction of the expansionist wall.

The Quartet, particularly those members with the necessary influence, should intensify their efforts towards ensuring the revival of the peace process and the achievement of the objectives set out in the road map. The United Nations should continue to work towards that end while at the same time providing the necessary humanitarian and other forms of assistance to the Palestinian people.

Malaysia strongly believes that concerted and coordinated action by the international community, particularly within the framework of the United Nations, is essential to ensure success in suppressing and preventing terrorism. We commend the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the relevant United Nations agencies in their work to assist Member States. We continue to believe that, to respond effectively to terrorism, it is equally important for the international community to understand and seek to ameliorate the conditions that generate it. Therefore, Malaysia remains supportive of the proposal by the Non-Aligned Movement that a high-level international conference be convened under the auspices of the United Nations to formulate a joint organized response of the international community to terrorism; and to obtain agreement on the definition of terrorism, as well as address its root causes, so as to clear up any ambiguities and uncertainties hampering international cooperation to combat terrorism. Malaysia has supported and contributed to regional and international

efforts to combat acts of terrorism. We will continue to honour our commitment.

The attack on United Nations headquarters in Baghdad was a tragic event not only for the United Nations but also for the international community. The attack points to the vulnerability of United Nations personnel in areas of conflict. It points to the need for the United Nations to be given security assurances in order for it to carry out its mandate. The international community must support the Secretary-General and all United Nations personnel concerned in their efforts at peacekeeping and peace-building, providing humanitarian assistance and promoting development, whether in Iraq, Afghanistan, West Africa or in other areas. The United Nations must be able to maintain its neutrality and credibility in order to be effective and successful, as it has done in places such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia and Timor-Leste.

Malaysia fully supports United Nations peacekeeping activities, which are given a clear mandate by the Security Council. We are pleased that a credible operational concept based on a specific time frame, with a clear exit strategy, has been adopted and successfully implemented in most United Nations peacekeeping operations. It is the obligation of all Member States to ensure the success of United Nations peacekeeping operations. For its part, Malaysia will continue to contribute personnel and expertise to assist in United Nations peacekeeping.

In the area of human rights, we welcome the call by the Secretary-General for the Commission on Human Rights to continue the process of reconsidering and strengthening its methods of work, in order to reduce the level of politicization in its work. We believe that the Commission should be more constructive, see less politicization of issues and be more positive in its approach and objectives so as to be effective.

Malaysia believes that Member States must act in accordance with the principles and norms of international law in their conduct of international relations. In this regard, Malaysia is supportive of initiatives taken by the United Nations to promote the rule of law at the international level. Malaysia recognizes that treaties are one of the main sources of international law. The universality and binding force of multilateral treaties would be enhanced if a large number of Member States were to become parties to them. Malaysia hopes that, in negotiations to elaborate international treaties, the concerns of as many countries as possible can be taken into consideration. All efforts should be made to reach consensus, particularly on controversial issues, thereby enabling universal acceptance.

Malaysia has always taken its international obligations seriously. Like many other sovereign nations, we undertake a thorough study before finally committing ourselves to a treaty.

During the recent treaty event in New York, Malaysia signed the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and deposited its instruments of accession to two conventions relating to the fight against international terrorism. We would like to commend the Secretary-General for his efforts to promote the participation of States in international treaties through initiatives such as organizing treaty events and training programmes, providing technical assistance on legal matters and the legal assistance web site, in particular on the implementation of treaties.

It is obvious that much more needs to be done in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and their targets. The United Nations Development Programme has estimated that an annual gross domestic product growth rate of 2.9 per cent a year is the minimum rate of growth required between now and 2015 to achieve the Goals. We agree with the Secretary-General that the central challenge facing the world today is the eradication of global poverty and hunger. We must also tackle the ever-present problem of killer diseases, in particular HIV/AIDS. In addition, we must be prepared to confront new diseases such as severe acute respiratory syndrome.

In that connection, my delegation joins the appeal to the developed countries to translate their support for and commitment to the Millennium Development Goals into real action to enable the developing countries concerned to deal effectively with many of the problems discussed by the Secretary-General in his report. We are pleased to inform the General Assembly that Malaysia has in general achieved — and in some instances exceeded — the first seven Goals. We remain committed to the achievement of the Goals worldwide. We will assist, within our means, other developing countries to achieve them through bilateral, regional and multilateral programmes.

Both the developed and the developing countries should also adhere to the new framework of mutual obligations and mutual accountability as laid out in the Monterrey Consensus. My delegation takes this opportunity to acknowledge and applaud the good work that has been done by the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies as it continues in its work in all areas to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. We must acknowledge the work done by the United Nations in supporting regional initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development. Malaysia fully supports all the efforts of the Secretary-General and the various United Nations agencies in that regard.

During the past year, we have witnessed a challenge to the foundation of the Organization's existence, in the form of a strong trend towards unilateral approaches on the part of some. That happened when war was launched against Iraq. In a way, that has affected the collective gathering by the international community of political will and resources to combat international terrorism since 11 September. The Secretary-General has responded in a decisive and timely way by urging Member States to return to the fundamentals of the Organization — essentially, to return to multilateralism. Malaysia strongly shares his sentiment. We must rededicate ourselves to the multilateral approach in all aspects of the work of the United Nations. We sincerely hope that that call will be reinforced with continued vigour by all Member States, in strict conformity with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

We must inject new dynamism into the General Assembly at this session. The political direction that has been provided by our leaders is a key element in enabling the Assembly to effectively address critical issues of concern to all of us and to take up the challenge to make the United Nations efficient and effective. My delegation believes that we, the Member States, should rise to that challenge now.

Mr. Staehelin (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, my delegation must thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/58/323) and its conclusions. The strengthening of multilateral institutions, their adaptation to new realities and respect for decisions taken collectively are indispensable to the attainment of the objectives contained in the Millennium Declaration.

The consensus reached at the Millennium Summit is weakening, and the United Nations must review its operations in order to be able to contribute effectively to the attainment of the goals set out in its Charter. We must take advantage of the Assembly's debates to reaffirm our attachment to multilateral cooperation and to the Organization's objectives. Today's multilateral problems demand multilateral solutions.

Three years after the Millennium Summit, we must acknowledge that we are lagging behind on the road map and that our pace is not sustained enough. That is the assessment of the most recent Human Development Report, which shows clearly that, despite the positive results witnessed in a number of regions, other regions risk falling far short of the established objectives for 2015.

Switzerland shares the view that there is no development without security and that it would be better to concentrate our efforts on eliminating the causes of conflicts and preventing them rather than to have to face their consequences later. Only economic, social and political stability enables everyone to develop and progress. We must focus our discussions of security on individuals and broaden our approach to human security. To help improve human security, we must also keep promises made concerning development. Proclaiming objectives is not enough; we must make them realities.

In Monterrey, the international community established a modern partnership to attain development objectives, recognizing that the fight against poverty cannot be reduced to an increase in public development assistance or in economic growth. More effective aid must be accompanied by, inter alia, sound national policies, good governance in developing countries and support for international financial institutions. It must also support efforts aimed at greater protection of natural resources as a basis for life and prosperity.

Trade liberalization can contribute to the fight against poverty. It plays an indispensable role in the integration of developing countries into the global economy, helping to free up the financial resources essential to attaining the Millennium Development Goals. Since no agreement was reached at the Cancún meeting, we must give multilateral negotiations another chance and avoid the temptation of protectionism.

In that regard, we reaffirm our conviction that the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the

World Trade Organization must strengthen their coordination, their cooperation and their consistency in the implementation of strategies aimed at attaining the Millennium Development Goals and those of sustainable development, while preserving their respective roles in their fields of action and competence. Switzerland believes that the relations among those institutions deserve to be re-examined, for example, by a group of independent personalities.

Collective responsibility in the quest for solutions and on the path towards comprehensive implementation of the Millennium Declaration in no way exempts any State from its individual responsibility to do everything necessary to ensure good management of public affairs and to guarantee respect for democracy and human rights, the protection of natural resources and the eradication of poverty.

Mr. Amer (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation has carefully considered the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization, contained in document A/58/1, and his report on the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit, contained in document A/58/323. We wish at the outset to express our satisfaction with the contents of those two reports, which not only detail the Secretary-General's efforts to contribute to the solution of international and regional problems and to enhancing international cooperation in all fields, but also reflect courageously and frankly the Organization's successes and failures in its work and what it must do in the future to address the world's problems.

The Secretary-General introduces his report by saying that this has been a trying year for the Organization in the area of peace and security. He nevertheless points to certain positive developments on the international scene, the solution of various problems in a number of regions, the outcome of the major international conferences and the impulse they give to sustainable development. We agree with his assessment that these developments indicate promising opportunities for establishing peace and stability in regions that continue to face problems and that there is a general trend towards addressing the economic problems of many States.

We are also satisfied that, although progress was elusive, the Secretary-General, with perseverance and resolve, made extra efforts to meet international political, economic and environmental challenges. We hope that these efforts will achieve results that reverse the trend towards increasing poverty, spreading disease, environmental deterioration and declining growth in many countries, especially the developing ones.

The Secretary-General has said that terrorism continues to represent a major threat to international peace and security. We believe that this view is shared by all, because terrorism — whether committed by countries, groups or individuals — threatens the sovereignty of States and erodes the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter. It is fair to say that the Organization has led the way in developing international conventions and agreements to safeguard humanity. My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's resolve to play a more active in combating terrorism and encourages all Member States to adhere to the international instruments aimed at containing and eventually eradicating this scourge.

My country has done just that. We are now party to the international anti-terrorism conventions and members of relevant regional organizations. We have submitted our principal and complementary reports to the Counter-Terrorism Committee, established under Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), and have answered all the Committee's questions.

While we have undertaken every possible measure to thwart terrorist activity, which we strongly condemn, we believe that the eradication of the threat requires us first to avoid double standards and to address terrorism's root causes, including occupation, oppression, corruption and racism. We should stop linking terrorism to a specific religion, culture or region, as some do. It is totally unacceptable to define as terrorism the struggles of peoples to protect themselves from their oppressors and to win their independence and freedom.

We also stress the fact that terrorism cannot be eradicated by unilateral action by one State or group of States. Terrorism can be eradicated only by coordinated and organized action. That is the essence of the Secretary-General's affirmation in a previous report that the United Nations alone can give legitimacy to the combat against terrorism. That is the right way of thinking.

We therefore hope that the text of a comprehensive treaty on terrorism can be drafted

successfully. More important still, we look forward to the convening of an international conference or a special session of the General Assembly to debate the phenomenon of terrorism, its motives and causes, and the measures necessary to eradicate it, but primarily to produce a clear definition that distinguishes between terrorism as an abhorrent criminal activity and the right of peoples to struggle for their self-determination.

Terrorism is one of the principal challenges facing the international community. However, we should not prioritize that scourge at the expense of other problems addressed by the Secretary-General in his reports on the work of the Organization and on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. My delegation shares the Secretary-General's concern at the lack of progress in disarmament, especially in the field of weapons of mass destruction. We again stress the need for all countries to destroy such weapons and to develop a time frame for such eradication, without which no one can feel safe or secure. This is especially necessary in the Middle East, where the process of weapons of mass destruction disarmament must include Israel, which has not joined the relevant international conventions.

We welcome the Secretary-General's determination to enhance cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in various fields, especially strategies to prevent and solve conflicts. We commend his zeal to avoid duplication in the work of the Organization, to streamline its procedures, enhance its transparency and ensure equitable distribution of responsibility among Member States.

We also welcome the success of attempts to achieve peace and national reconciliation in a number of African countries and we call on the Secretary-General and his special envoys to make further efforts to solve problems in other parts of the continent. We also urge the United Nations system to support African efforts to promote socio-economic development for the people of the continent. We welcome the pledges of support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The priority in this regard should be the cooperation of all partners with African organizations, especially the African Union, which is leading that and other initiatives to eradicate hotbeds of tension, poverty, disease, hunger and underdevelopment from the continent.

We agree with the Secretary-General's statement of 23 September that the United Nations, though not a perfect instrument, is a precious one. The Organization's importance lies in taking action that reflects the aspirations of the peoples it represents. To that end, reform is of the utmost necessity. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's call for strengthening the role of the General Assembly and, most importantly, to empower it to monitor and supervise the Security Council and to follow up the implementation of the Council's resolutions, which have become irrelevant outside these halls.

We also welcome the Secretary-General's call for the reactivation of other organs, including the Economic and Social Council, as well as of the international economic mechanisms. We agree that we need to break through the current impasse in the reform of the Security Council and expand its membership to make it more representative of the international community and of the realities of today's world. We also underline the need to remove all the obstacles that prevent the Council from carrying out its functions, in particular the right of veto, as called for by my country and by the Non-Aligned Movement, the African Union and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

We also welcome the Secretary-General's proposal to create a high-level panel of eminent personalities to consider all aspects of global challenges. This proposal is entirely in keeping with the appeals that we made during, inter alia, the most recent Non-Aligned Movement summit.

We request the Secretary-General to take into consideration the principle of equitable geographical distribution when appointing members of that panel and to ensure that the personalities are well versed in international affairs and in the working methods of the Organization. We appeal to the members of that panel, when undertaking their important task, to remain in direct contact with Member States so as the ensure that their views are taken into account and are reflected in the report that they submit for the consideration of all Member States.

Mr. Haraguchi (Japan): The members of the international community are becoming increasingly interdependent as a result of the advance of globalization. We are no longer able to achieve our security or prosperity alone. We need to behave in accordance with international agreements and rules so

as to avoid unnecessary friction among us and to enhance cooperation. There is an increasing need for an effective, properly structured multilateral framework. Furthermore, the challenges we face today are becoming more and more diverse and complex. Effective, lasting solutions have to be sought in a comprehensive and integrated manner.

The United Nations, with its universal membership and its broad mandate, is the only body that can meet those requirements of our time. We believe that the United Nations should continue to play an important role — a role which no other international organization can fulfil.

It is true that a number of frustrations and criticisms have arisen in relation to the United Nations as a result of the handling of the Iraq situation. However, they should be taken as a disguised expression of the high expectations we have of the role of the United Nations. We continue to believe in the relevance of the United Nations as the Organization charged with the task of maintaining international peace and security.

Of course, this does not mean that we are satisfied with the Organization's performance. There is no question that the United Nations needs to be reformed in a number of areas. We, the Member States, need to reflect seriously on ways and means to revitalize the United Nations: how best to reform the Organization in order to enable it more effectively to carry out the functions expected of it as an authentic system of world governance.

In that regard, Japan is of the view that Security Council reform, administrative and budgetary reform and the revitalization of the General Assembly deserve particular attention. First, Security Council reform basically involves enhancing the Council's legitimacy and effectiveness. I could not agree more with the Secretary-General's comments, in his report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration that, "The composition of the Security Council ... seems at odds with the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century" (*A/58/323, para. 96*).

In our view, the Council needs new permanent members that are both willing and able to shoulder global responsibilities. As our Foreign Minister clearly indicated in her address during the general debate, Japan continues to work actively for the realization of Security Council reform and would like to assume greater responsibility as a permanent member of a reformed Council.

Secondly, in order to meet new challenges within its limited financial resources, the United Nations must further rationalize its budget through the stricter prioritization of its activities and the further redeployment of resources from obsolete activities. That is the basic position of my Government with regard to deliberations on the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005.

The scale of assessments ought to be changed, in a timely manner, so as to make it more properly balanced and equitable, in conformity with each country's actual economic performance, as well as with its status and responsibility in the United Nations.

I would also like to draw attention to the need for equitable geographical distribution among Member States with regard to the number of staff in the Secretariat. That goal is still far from being attained. Severe underrepresentation has to be redressed as a matter of priority. I would like in particular to stress that, unless a sense of fairness is widely shared among Member States, we cannot hope for the smooth management of the Organization. In the long run, the United Nations will enjoy the wholehearted support of Member States only when each one of them considers the Organization to be managed in a fair and equitable manner. If the views of certain countries go unheeded and they are left with the feeling that they are obliged to bear excessive burdens or that they are being unfairly treated, I am afraid that this may lead to the serious erosion of support for the Organization.

Thirdly, some may believe that United Nations diplomats are too preoccupied with the task of adopting a great many resolutions every year that hardly have any real impact on the outside world. In order to enable the General Assembly to effectively play the role of the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations, the discussion there must be reinvigorated and regain relevance. The obvious step to be taken in this direction is the further streamlining and consolidation of the agenda.

I would now like to turn to the three areas that the Secretary-General addresses in his report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration: peace and security; development; and human rights and democracy.

The restoration of security to and the promotion of the reconstruction of Iraq remain high on our agenda. Japan believes that it is critically important for the international community to extend support to Iraq so that it can become a moderate, unified country which coexists peacefully with neighbouring countries. In this context, we sincerely hope that the new draft resolution now being discussed will provide a good basis for strengthened international partnership.

As far as peace and security in North-East Asia is concerned, North Korea's nuclear development programme is of the gravest concern, not only to Japan, but also to the international community as a whole. We urge North Korea once again to promptly dismantle all of its nuclear development programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

At the same time, as Foreign Minister Kawaguchi stated, Japan intends to effect the normalization of diplomatic relations with North Korea on the basis of Pyongyang Declaration, after achieving a comprehensive resolution of all the outstanding issues, including the nuclear issue, the missile issue and the abduction issue.

In the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, Japan, as the only nation to have experienced the enormous tragedies caused by nuclear weapons, is making strenuous and resolute diplomatic efforts towards a peaceful and safe world, freed from nuclear weapons through a realistic and incremental approach. We will submit a draft resolution to the current General Assembly session entitled, "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons". I call on Member States to extend to the draft their overwhelming support.

We were all shocked by the terrorist attack on the United Nations offices in Baghdad. It was an attack on us all. We must take resolute action against those despicable terrorists. It is now more important than ever for all members of the international community to show the political will to take forceful counter-terrorism measures and to build the capacity to implement them. At the same time, more effective ways should be explored to ensure the safety of United Nations and humanitarian personnel.

The realization of a universal criminal justice system to put an end to impunity for those who have committed serious crimes is another means of addressing the root causes of violent conflict. Japan, having played a central role in supporting Cambodia's efforts to carry out the Khmer Rouge trials, with the help of the United Nations, welcomes the signing of the draft agreement between the United Nations and Cambodia. We call on both the Cambodian Government and the United Nations to expedite the process leading to the early realization of justice in Cambodia and we appeal to Member States to extend support to the trials.

I am happy to note that the third Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD III) was successfully concluded on 1 October. The TICAD process, which celebrates its tenth anniversary this year, demonstrates Japan's firm commitment to African development. We are proud to have continued to stress the need for assistance to Africa at a time when the international community was suffering from aid fatigue to Africa. It is our hope that the results of TICAD III will serve as another important impetus for further development in Africa.

In order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, all concerned countries must increase their efforts to realize their commitments and work to produce concrete positive results. It would be a pity if developed and developing countries ended up accusing one another of a lack of effort in working towards our common goals and objectives.

Regarding the Secretary-General's report on the Millennium Declaration (A/58/323), my Government has some specific comments and is preparing a note to present to the Secretariat and to distribute subsequently to Member States.

Natural disasters often wipe out the precious fruits of our laborious efforts towards development. Therefore, disaster reduction is one of the indispensable prerequisites for sustainable development. Let me take this occasion to reiterate Japan's proposal to host a world conference on disaster reduction, in the framework of the United Nations, in order to develop new strategies for the twenty-first century.

For achieving sustainable development, education is another key issue to be emphasized. Japan will continue to promote the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and would like to propose a draft resolution on this item.

We are convinced that respect for human rights, establishment of democracy and good governance are essential ingredients for the sound foundation on which decent societies may flourish. However, the process by which this is achieved is by no means an automatic and self-sustaining one. It has been, and continues to be, affected by a whole variety of external and internal challenges.

Those challenges are so diverse and complex that we need a more comprehensive and integrated approach that encompasses a wide range of the political, economic, and social aspects of our life. Japan is actively promoting the conceptual framework of human security and strengthening our efforts in protecting and empowering individuals and communities from a human-centred perspective. We will continue to work for the realization of the recommendations made in the report by the Commission on Human Security.

The progress achieved in implementing the Millennium Declaration is to be reviewed in 2005. Japan remains committed to making its proper contribution and to working with other Member States towards the attainment of the goals of the Declaration.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Jamaica.

Mr. Neil (Jamaica): Jamaica aligns itself with the statement made this morning by the permanent representative of Morocco, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Our review of the work of the United Nations over the past year comes at a significant time in the history of the Organization. The events over the past year have brought new challenges and questions concerning the future of our system of collective security. This Assembly now provides a timely opportunity for assessment and reflection, since we are clearly at a point where we should contemplate some reshaping of the international system.

Jamaica congratulates the Secretary-General for his leadership in the past year and we have studied his report (A/58/1), which, as usual, gives a comprehensive review of activities of the United Nations over the past year. It was a difficult and eventful year for the United Nations, dominated by intense preoccupations in the area of peace and security. The war in Iraq was deeply divisive and challenging to the role and relevance of our system of collective security. What happened was damaging to the Organization and to relations within the international community. Lessons are to be learned from that experience, the most important of which is that there is no safe alternative to multilateralism or our collective system, which is the foundation for international security. What is needed is to strengthen the effectiveness of the system in decision-making and enforcement mechanisms and to improve adherence of the Membership to the obligations of the Charter and the rules of international law.

By precept and in practice, the United Nations must be democratic in its decision making, equitable in its policies, principled in its actions and impartial, objective and non-discriminatory in the application of its rules and standards. The shocking and outrageous events of 19 August, which we all have condemned, underscore the importance of maintaining the image of the United Nations in commanding respect and as an impartial arbiter, acting in the interest of all nations and peoples in the global community.

There are some points of detail in the Secretary-General's report on which we are constrained to express reservations with regard to interpretation of context and circumstances. It is important that in such matters there is balance in the respective roles of the Secretariat and of the Member States, and that in cases where United Nations assistance is given, it is not construed in terms that give rise to misleading impressions. Paragraphs 95 of document A/58/323 and 59 of document A/58/1 are the subject of these concerns. However, in general we are satisfied that his report reflects the mixed record of the Organization's achievements and setbacks since our last session.

In the field of disarmament, we share his disappointment at the weakening of the international commitment to disarmament norms, and at the stalemate in the negotiating bodies. We must all be concerned with the danger of the spread of weapons of mass destruction. But we are also concerned about the proliferation of small arms and conventional weapons. These issues should be addressed in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner, taking into account the security concerns of all States.

With regard to terrorism, there was increased cooperation in counter-terrorism over the year but there is need to broaden the strategy which should not be

confined to military and financial measures, but should also be combined with a strategy of prevention, based on careful analysis and actions to eliminate the root causes.

The work of the United Nations has had its share of success in Africa, but it is clear that more resources are necessary to strengthen the foundations for peace and stability in post-conflict environments. Important achievements were also made in meeting humanitarian commitments, but here again, resource constraints are hampering the work of the Organization, especially in combating dangerous diseases and in providing emergency assistance for disaster relief and alleviating food shortages.

In relation to the Millennium Development Goals, we note that limited progress has been achieved, but there seems to be in significant areas, some loss of momentum. Implementation of the Monterrey and Johannesburg commitments is moving at too slow a pace towards the targets set within the prescribed timeframes. The sluggish growth in the world economy might explain this in part, but it is also apparent that the political solidarity and commitment to international development cooperation is still far below desired levels to meet the objectives of Goal 8 of the programme.

We also believe that too often development assistance is being conditioned on specified political criteria and the achievement of these conditionalities are given a greater priority than the substantive needs that exist in relation to poverty reduction and economic welfare in the developing countries. The critical problem remains the quantum of resources and we commend those donor countries which have consistently met their prescribed official development assistance target and urge that their example be followed. We also continue to urge that priorities in economic development cooperation reflect concerns of vulnerability as well as absolute poverty levels in the developing countries.

We also wish to say that overall development needs and the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals require that the United Nations play a more important role in the formulation of policies affecting the development process. Currently, these are still largely determined by the Bretton Woods institutions within a system of governance in which little voice or influence is allowed to the developing countries. This results in the formulation of substantive policies in finance and trade tailored to ideological prescriptions, rather than the economic and social dynamics and the diversity of circumstances existing in the developing countries.

For this reason, we need the United Nations to exert greater influence and to play a more central role in determining the policies guiding international economic relations, for these have a profound bearing on security and stability within the global community. We recognize that some steps have been taken towards coordination, but we need to go further and develop a mechanism within the United Nations which would oversee development issues and devise prescriptions for development crises as they arise.

The Secretary-General has emphasized the need for reform and we support his intention to appoint a high panel of eminent persons to consider the issue. We look forward to its results. However, this should not delay our efforts to make progress at the present session. Mention has been made of the need for radical reform, but we have our doubts whether what is needed now is radical reform, for we believe that the fundamentals are in place. What is needed are adjustments and changes to bring the existing structures in line with the Charter principles and current needs.

Reform must be in the direction of achieving more democratization and revitalization of the role of the principal organs. We should remember that democratization is not simply about structures and procedures; it is about transparency and open participation in an environment for the free exchange of views and for an inclusive process of decision-making which takes into account the interests and views of all States.

What should also be borne in mind is the importance of revitalization in relation to the political commitment of Member States. A major part of the problem we face today results from a failure to observe the obligations of the Charter and to honour its principles — the sovereign equality of States, mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, self-determination and the peaceful settlement of disputes. In the absence of a strong commitment to adherence, it will not matter what kind of structures or procedures are devised if States will not honour their obligations.

For the international system to operate effectively and enjoy the confidence of the world, all States must be bound by its common rules, without exception. Whatever may be a nation's degree of military power or level of development, all nations must abide by this obligation and all are entitled to equal security and opportunity to share in global prosperity. Our reform efforts should seek to achieve these objectives.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Serbia and Montenegro.

Mr. Šahović (Serbia and Montenegro): My delegation has studied the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization with great interest. We fully concur with the Secretary-General's assessment that the past year has been an extremely trying one, particularly in the field of peace and security. Indeed, developments during this period have placed the Organization before great challenges.

Terrorism continues to pose a major worldwide threat. Hence, the fight against terrorism should continue to be a major area of engagement of the United Nations. My country firmly believes that this scourge can be best fought through the mechanism of close multilateral cooperation, never losing sight of the necessity to respect human rights and promote values of tolerance and dialogue. We stand firmly committed to fully contributing to all regional and global initiatives to combat terrorism.

In connection with the struggle against terrorism, but also in a broader context, we support enhancement of the role of the United Nations in the field of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

As indicated in the Secretary-General's report, the situation in Iraq and the Middle East peace process have preoccupied the agenda of the Organization, as well as the attention of the world public in the past year. My Government fully supports efforts to establish an optimal time frame for the restoration of sovereignty to the Iraqi people. An active and clear role of the United Nations in facilitating and supporting this process offers the best chance for success. We also consider it vital to put implementation of the Middle East road map back on track.

Allow me to touch on the issues of conflict prevention, peacemaking and peace-building. The report before us gives ample evidence of the many crises that demand the continuous engagement of the United Nations in efforts to stabilize conditions in fragile regions on various continents.

My country is currently contributing to these efforts in the United Nations missions in Timor-Leste and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and is preparing to join the United Nations operation in Liberia.

Turning to one specific aspect of peacekeeping and peace-building, I should like to emphasize that we welcome the intensified cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. Close cooperation with the European Union in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in West Africa have yielded exemplary results.

Our part of the world is a particular case in point in this respect. The smooth transition from the United Nations to the European Union mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina has provided a model for future reference. Positive instances of cooperation between the United Nations, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) can be seen in my country as well. Suffice it to say on this occasion that those regional organizations lead two of the four pillars of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

Speaking of UNMIK, we regret to note that the report omitted any mention of the unsatisfactory conditions on the ground in our province of Kosovo and Metohija. All relevant periodic reports — of the Mission itself, of the Secretary-General, of United Nations bodies and of other international organizations present in the field — conceded that there is an unacceptable level of violence directed against minorities. The international presence has failed to put an end to the activities of several extremist organizations of ethnic Albanians, including the Albanian National Army (ANA), which UNMIK itself proclaimed a terrorist organization. The overall situation, which is also affected by high levels of organized crime — including trafficking in arms, drugs and human beings — had led to perhaps the most significant failure of all — the lack of refugee and internally displaced persons returns.

It is therefore particularly surprising that the plight of the hundreds of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons in my country has

warranted no mention in the report, although approximately 260,000 internally displaced persons from Kosovo and Metohija still reside in Serbia and Montenegro, unable to return home.

In addition to this discouraging situation, I must also add that Serbia and Montenegro is hosting almost 400,000 refugees — about 65 per cent of them from Croatia and the remaining number from Bosnia and Herzegovina. There is, however, a considerable difference in the rate of returns to those two countries: half of the overall numbers of refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina have returned home, while less than a fifth of the refugees from Croatia have been able to do so.

While we recognize that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is withdrawing from the region, that should not mean that all international attention to, and assistance for, refugees in the region should stop. On the contrary, it should continue. For our part, we are fully engaged in bilateral efforts with both aforementioned neighbouring countries to facilitate returns.

I would like to emphasize Serbia and Montenegro's full support for the enhanced engagement of the United Nations in promoting human rights. We welcome the fact that, during the past year, a large number of States, including my own, have acceded to many international human rights instruments. I am pleased to be able to note that Serbia and Montenegro has ratified six of the seven conventions and five of the optional protocols mentioned in the report. That fact, together with the overall improvement of the human rights situation in the country, led to the termination of the mandate of the special representative of the Commission on Human Rights who monitored developments in the region.

In this context, it would be difficult to overstate the importance of the increasing focus of the United Nations on the promotion of the rule of law in post-conflict societies, as highlighted also by the recent debate in the Security Council on this subject. Allow me to reiterate in this connection that Serbia and Montenegro is fully committed to cooperating with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

As for the follow-up to the Millennium Summit, I would like to note the assessment in the Secretary-General's report that the Goals could be reached if, in the period leading up to 2015, we maintain and increase the momentum generated over the last three years. The successful and timely implementation of the Goals will not only be a great contribution to the struggle against extreme poverty and to the meeting of basic human needs, but will target some of the main causes of tensions and armed conflicts, as well as intolerance and terrorism.

Efforts to achieve the Goals call for a new partnership, involving mutual responsibilities. The Goals can be achieved only if efforts in developing countries are supported by those countries with the means to provide official development assistance, debt relief, market access and stimulation of foreign direct investment.

We fully support the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, reflecting a new, comprehensive and cross-cutting concept. We deem most useful the findings of the ad hoc Working Group established to look at the whole mechanism of the follow-up processes to these conferences and summits, especially with respect to simplifying, improving the efficiency of, and integrating the efforts of the United Nations system in this respect.

My Government attaches great importance to the holding of a major political event in 2005 to review the progress achieved in implementing the commitments contained in the Millennium Declaration and the outcomes of conferences and summits in the economic and social fields.

I would like to conclude by saying that we welcome the Secretary-General's initiative for a measured appraisal of how events in the past year have affected the United Nations. Indeed, Member States need to engage actively in the process of assessing the kind of Organization that will be best adapted to contributing to international stability, in order that it may continue to serve as a central multilateral instrument of global cooperation in the years ahead.

We look forward to the conclusions and recommendations of the panel of eminent personalities that the Secretary-General intends to appoint to discuss the reform of the United Nations.

Mr. Al-Otaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to commend the remarkable and

tireless efforts made by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, in discharging the heavy responsibilities entrusted to him in the political, economic and humanitarian fields, and to express our appreciation to him for his wise leadership, despite the difficult challenges he faces.

My delegation has read the two reports, under items 10 and 60, on the work of the Organization and on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, respectively, and our statement will be in line with the general trend towards the rationalization and reform of the work of the General Assembly. We will not reiterate Kuwait's position on all the issues included in the report, because the General Assembly is aware of my delegation's position, having heard Kuwait's statement in the general debate.

My delegation would like to comment on the content of the aforementioned reports. First, Kuwait agrees with the Secretary-General that the war against Iraq, which liberated it from the ousted regime, was a challenge to collective security, and that there is no alternative to the role of the United Nations in maintaining collective security and international peace and security.

However, my delegation believes that the war against Iraq was not the first challenge to collective security and to the legitimacy of the United Nations. Political events and past wars have taken place that cannot be ignored that represented a flagrant challenge to our Organization — starting with the Israeli occupation of Arab territories, the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq, the flouting by Saddam Hussain of United Nations resolutions over a period of 12 years, and the divided views of the international community on how to address those violations.

My delegation, however, sees here a golden opportunity for maintaining the credibility and prestige of the United Nations, through the efforts made by the Secretary-General to achieve international consensus on the best means to help the Iraqi people restore their sovereignty and reconstruct their country.

Secondly, my delegation noted that the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization accurately detailed, in chronological order, the development of the situation in Iraq in all its political aspects. It explained the efforts of the Organization to reach a peaceful settlement in this respect. However, it did not touch on the efforts of the United Nations to follow up the issue of Kuwaiti prisoners of war — an issue that the ousted regime in Iraq brushed aside and did not cooperate in resolving, despite the adoption by the Security Council of four resolutions under Chapter VII. Neither did it refer to the most recent developments in this matter: the discovery of the mass graves of those people and of third-country nationals. That regime denied the facts for 12 years, during which time the prisoners and their families in Kuwait lived through indescribable suffering — shared by the people of Iraq, who suffered under the ousted regime. We hope that the Secretary-General will not ignore this issue but will follow it up, especially given the fact that earlier reports of the Secretary-General have periodically referred directly to it, and to the question of Kuwaiti property.

In this respect, we would like to express our appreciation to the members of the Security Council, High-Level Coordinator Yuli Vorontsov, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement for the honourable stand that they have taken, as reflected in their recent declarations, strongly condemning the killing of Kuwaiti prisoners of war by the ousted regime and requesting that those responsible be brought to justice.

Thirdly, my delegation concluded, after careful perusal of the reports on the work of the Organization and on implementation of the Millennium Declaration, that there is international agreement with regard to the link between development and poverty eradication on the one hand, and the establishment of peace and security on the other. This has become a clearly established principle. Political will for peace must now take precedence over narrow self-interest.

My delegation believes that the follow-up to the goals of the Millennium Declaration, especially in the areas of reform, development and poverty eradication, should not be carried out on the basis of periodic reports covering short periods. The objective should be a long-term strategic perspective with a view to revitalizing the role of the United Nations in the new century and linking it to the taking of well-defined practical steps. We believe that the attainment of that objective should be the focus of the Organization's work. There is no need to begin a vicious cycle of reports from one reporting period to the next.

We agree that a firm schedule should be drawn up to review comprehensively what has actually been implemented of the goals of the Millennium Declaration and what still needs to be done. Here, we welcome the follow-up process, which is comprehensive in that respect.

In conclusion, we would like to reaffirm our support for the Secretary-General's initiative to establish a high-level panel to review issues relating to strengthening the role of the United Nations and to submit recommendations to the General Assembly. We believe that the reform process must continue so as to ensure the effectiveness of the United Nations and its collective multilateral work.

Mr. Nambiar (India): I would like to convey to you, Mr. President, the appreciation of my delegation for the considerable efficiency with which you have been conducting the work of this session.

The Secretary-General has presented a comprehensive report (A/58/1) on the activities of the Organization during the past year. He has also presented an important report (A/58/323) on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. During the general debate last week and the week before, many world leaders emphasized that the events of the past few months, especially those in Iraq, have shaken some of the fundamental assumptions governing the working of this Organization. Not only have some of these developments cast a shadow on the legitimacy of the world Organization as the body representing the aspirations and concerns of the world community at large, rather than just a part of it, but they have reopened the broader debate on the future path this Organization must tread. We agree with the Secretary-General that the present juncture represents both a challenge and an opportunity for the international community to address meaningfully the need for urgent reform of the institutions and processes of the United Nations.

We pay special tribute to the late Sergio Vieira de Mello for his selfless and dedicated efforts on behalf of the United Nations to assist Iraq in its return to normalcy. Sergio Vieira de Mello and his colleagues who laid down their lives in Baghdad on 19 August 2003 served in the finest tradition of the international civil service, and their loss will be irreparable to the Organization. We express our sincere condolences over that loss, just as we condemn the senseless terrorist attack on the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad.

India endorses the Secretary-General's call for the early restoration of full sovereignty to the Iraqi people. We hope the requisite conditions, including appropriate security and political measures, for the active re-engagement of the United Nations in Iraq will be forthcoming. We believe that the United Nations should play a crucial role in the process of the political and economic reconstruction of Iraq.

In his reports, the Secretary-General correctly focused on the hard threats from terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. Those threats are real and imminent, and they cannot be ignored. The proactive approach of the United Nations in combating the global threat of terrorism has been evident in the functioning of the Security Council Committees established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) and to resolution 1267 (1999) relating respectively to counter-terrorism and to the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. However, given the increasing reach of terrorist networks and their ability to disrupt the orderly functioning of society and threaten the lives and livelihoods of large numbers of people worldwide, the international community needs to accelerate, through practical and realistic measures, the pace of its collective actions to meet the challenge posed by terrorists and their sponsors.

The Secretary-General has referred to new terrorist attacks in different parts of the world. Those incidents only reinforce the view that no religion remains immune to such attacks. There can be no justification for connecting any particular religion with terrorism. Nor can any political, territorial, religious or ideological rationalization be used to justify the killing of innocent men, women and children in terrorist attacks.

In his two reports, the Secretary-General has stressed the need to combat terrorism while ensuring full compliance with established human rights and other international norms. We fully agree with that view. But it is equally important to note that States are accountable for their actions through their legal and other obligations, both international and domestic. Every State Member of the United Nations is fully aware of those obligations. Governments of Member States that form part of democratic polities also find their policies subjected to the periodic scrutiny of their people, to whom they are ultimately accountable. On

the other hand, a disproportionate emphasis upon this area of a Member State's actions could serve as an unintended handle for non-State actors who seek to evade responsibility for their own action. It also — however unwittingly — seems to place rule-abiding Member States and lawless terrorist outfits on the same plane. It must be remembered that those outfits and their adherents are accountable to none for their mindless terrorism and violate the most basic of the human rights of their hapless victims, namely, their right to life.

The Secretary-General has pointed out that in the 25 years since the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, there has been little forward movement on multilateral disarmament issues. India has consistently pursued the objective of global disarmament based on the principles of universality, non-discrimination and effective compliance. We strongly emphasize that the Conference on Disarmament must be allowed to play its mandated role as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body.

The increased danger of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists is also highlighted in the Secretary-General's report. Recognizing that concern, last year India initiated a draft resolution entitled "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction", which was adopted by consensus as resolution 57/83. We propose to introduce an updated version of that draft resolution during the current session of the General Assembly for adoption with the support of all concerned.

In recent years, the Security Council has increasingly resorted to the use of sanctions as a tool for promoting and maintaining international peace and security. We fully concur with the Secretary-General that while sanctions should maximize pressure on their intended targets, they should not adversely impact on innocent civilian populations or third countries. In that context, the work of the Interlaken, Bonn-Berlin and Stockholm processes have been invaluable in refining the instruments of international sanctions. It is our view that similar efforts need to be undertaken to further improve sanctions against terrorist groups and non-State actors.

While presenting his report on the work of the Organization (A/58/1) at the beginning of the general debate, the Secretary-General announced his intention to establish a high-level panel of eminent personalities entrusted with the task of reviewing and making recommendations on strengthening the United Nations through reforming its institutions and processes. Almost every speaker in the general debate welcomed the initiative of the Secretary-General. We reiterate our support for the Secretary-General in his efforts at initiating a process of far-reaching reforms of the Organization, its institutions and processes. We stand ready to cooperate with other Member States in carrying forward the efforts of the Secretary-General in that regard.

The Secretary-General has pointed out that the Security Council must garner the widest possible support for its decisions and actions, and that this can only be achieved if it is perceived to be broadly representative of the international community and the geopolitical realities of the contemporary world. He has also drawn attention to the fact that the enlargement of the Security Council has been on the agenda of the General Assembly for more than a decade. For the decisions of the United Nations in general and of the Security Council in particular to carry international credibility and, indeed, legitimacy, the expansion of the Security Council is imperative. Expansion should take place at both the permanent and non-permanent levels to include countries that represent significant sections of the world population, economic aspirations, political values and commitment to the United Nations system. We should take advantage of the opportunity afforded to us by the Secretary-General's proposals and the receptivity of a large number of Member States to this idea, to forge ahead in the interests of multilateralism and collective international decision-making.

During the current session of the General Assembly, my delegation looks forward to advancing the agenda for further change in the Organization. The General Assembly has called for reports on several of the proposals, and we remain ready to consider them actively in the relevant intergovernmental forums.

We would like to express satisfaction at the role played by the United Nations in the coordination of humanitarian assistance. The Consolidated Appeals Process is a useful tool, and the ongoing process of strengthening it further should, we feel, also lead to a more adequate and equitable funding of humanitarian crises. At the same time, we are somewhat uneasy with the blurring of the mandate of the organizations of the

development system which has taken place in recent years. The alleviation of human suffering is a moral imperative, and United Nations agencies possess certain comparative advantages for the implementation and delivery of humanitarian assistance. The use of these agencies should not, however, lead to a diversion of development assistance. That would be short-sighted and self-defeating. The components of the United Nations system themselves have a responsibility to ensure that this does not happen, notwithstanding the current competitive aid environment.

Over the years, the Commission on Human Rights has assumed increased significance as a focal point for addressing human rights issues. Improving the efficiency and methods of work of the Commission has therefore engaged the attention of Member States in recent times and will continue. On more than one occasion, the Secretary-General has raised the issue of the membership of the Commission, and the responsibilities and privileges that members of the Commission assume, and the need for a possible code of conduct for members. We are not persuaded. In our view, such prescriptions strike at the very root of the principle of sovereign equality of Member States enshrined in the United Nations. Concern has also been expressed at the politicization of the Commission on Human Rights. Selective criteria for membership will serve only to accentuate politicization, not reduce it. And finally, violations, and those responsible for violations, of human rights can be addressed by engaging them and bringing them into the fold of the Commission, not by leaving them outside.

We welcome the Secretary-General's observation that "poverty and grievance over injustices are only indirectly related to terrorism and cannot excuse it" (*A/58/1, para. 5*). We also welcome the increase in the practice of the Security Council requesting assessment reports on the humanitarian implications of current and possible future sanction regimes.

We are happy to note that the negotiations between the United Nations and Cambodia had yielded the fruitful outcome of a draft agreement signed at Phnom Penh on 6 June 2003.

We note that the Ad Hoc Committee on jurisdictional immunities of States and their property has succeeded in resolving all of the outstanding issues regarding the draft articles on jurisdictional immunities that the International Law Commission adopted in 1991. Considering the importance of those draft articles and their ability to contribute to the development of international law, we feel it more appropriate to adopt them as a legally binding instrument. Our concerns about the employment of terrorist methods across boundaries are well known. States which sponsor such international criminal activities are responsible under international law.

I shall now briefly refer to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation and follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit (A/58/323). The report states that the question remains open as to whether the world is managing to build the more inclusive and equitable globalization called for in the Millennium Declaration. It also affirms, correctly, that it would be no exaggeration to state that the success or failure of the Millennium Development Goals hinges on whether developed countries meet their commitments in the areas of trade, debt relief and aid.

The Secretary-General has reminded us that achieving the Millennium Development Goals requires a collective response to the challenges faced by the international community in the area of development. The challenge before us is to translate the commitments that have been undertaken into concrete actions so that the internationally agreed development goals are achieved. A sustained and broad-based annual per capita income increase of 3 per cent is required to meet the goal of reducing by half, by the year 2015, the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day. It has been estimated that an additional $50 billion a year in official development assistance alone will be needed. Forward movement in trade negotiations to address the key concerns of developing countries, in particular increased market access for products of export interest to the developing countries, and the operationalization of special, differential treatment for developing countries, are urgently needed steps towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We are disappointed that the Fifth World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference at Cancún failed to produce an agreement that would have addressed the interests and concerns of the developing countries.

The Millennium Declaration is based on a vision of global solidarity. Millennium Development Goals represent a global compact that brings together all Member States, developed as well as developing. We note that the Secretariat has adopted a core strategy for

supporting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. One of the three elements of the strategy is the monitoring of progress at the national level. Thirty-seven national Millennium Development Goals reports have been prepared and another 60 are to be completed by the end of this year.

However, not one of these 97 reports covers a developed country. The question that inevitably arises is why this should be so. We note also that it is the Secretary-General's view that developed countries should be encouraged, working through the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development or other forums, to agree upon time-bound deadlines for the pledges they have made on Millennium Development Goal 8, comparable to the 2015 target for the first seven Millennium Goals. The Millennium Declaration was adopted in a universal setting. If the Declaration and the time-bound commitments for the first seven Millennium Development Goals were accepted by the United Nations and are subject to monitoring by it, why then should the eighth Millennium Development Goal not also be governed by the same time-bound commitment and subjected to similar monitoring by the United Nations?

The Secretary-General clearly states the view that the success or failure of Millennium Development Goals is dependent on the fulfilment of commitments by developed countries. If the Organization is to meet the test of even-handedness and representativeness in its functioning, we would urge that country-level reports be prepared for developed countries, as well as with regard to progress on the commitments made by them to developing countries for the achievement of Millennium Development Goals.

These are some questions that arise on one of the main elements of the core strategy of the Secretariat. The lack of a satisfactory response to these questions would no doubt detract from the credibility of he monitoring exercise. Questions also arise on another element of the Secretariat strategy. The Secretary-General launched, in October last year, the Millennium Development Goals campaign. This campaign seeks to build coalitions in developing countries that would encourage Governments to implement pro-poor policies.

I speak for a country, Government and people united in a single coalition and one primary mission. That mission is to eradicate poverty and to raise the standard of living of our people. For the democratically elected Government of India, there can be no higher aim, no nobler objective, than the eradication of poverty.

So, what is the coalition that the Secretariat would build? And what is the advocacy that they would engage in? Does the Secretariat wish to assume the role of keeper of scores or conscience? These, however, are not roles that Member States have assigned to it. Nor has the Charter done so. As to seeking a wider advocacy role within the broader elements of civil society, it must be understood that these are, at best, self-assumed roles that the United Nations bureaucracy may seek to influence, without getting out of touch with its main constituency within Member States.

During the current session we shall actively follow the reform of the planning and budgetary process. We are conscious of the importance of reform, not only in imparting efficiency and substance to the process itself, but also in improving mechanisms that ensure adequate budgetary provisions to meet the requirements of mandated programmes and activities. Considering its long-term implications for the Organization, there is need for urgency in addressing this issue but we need also to avoid hasty or half-cooked conclusions.

In the area of ongoing reforms, we appreciate the efforts to improve the servicing of the General Assembly, refocusing public information activities and the wide-ranging reforms in human resources management that have taken place. Considerable investment has been made in enhancing the information and communication technology base of the Organization. While some results are already apparent, we look forward to returns that are commensurate with the volume of such investment.

The importance of the current session also lies in the fact that the General Assembly will be considering the regular budget of the Organization for the coming biennium. We welcome the presentation of the regular budget in a results-based budgeting framework. We hope that further development of results-based budgeting tools will help the Organization to better justify the resources needed for its programmes and activities and to improve accountability.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria): Austria fully associates itself with the statement delivered by Italy, on behalf of the European Union, and would like to concentrate only on a few points. First of all, my delegation commends the Secretary-General on his reports on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, as well as on the work of the Organization. They are an excellent basis for our debate.

In his report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, the Secretary-General asks for the development of a fair and consistent collective security system based on a common understanding of what the major threats of today's world are and what our common responses should be. In our view, it is of critical importance to put the human being at the very centre of this debate.

Security, as we see it, is human security. Human security can embrace both the soft threats, such as natural disasters, environmental degradation, poverty and disease, as well as the hard threats, such as terrorism, transnational organized crime and weapons of mass destruction. We need to study those threats through the prism of the human beings concerned, in particular the most vulnerable.

Having chaired the Human Security Network, Austria is committed to further promote the concept of human security within the United Nations, focusing particularly on the need to improve the plight of the unacceptably large number of people who face poverty, suffer from disease and remain uneducated. At the same time, we must concentrate on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The year 2003 has been, beyond any doubt, a very difficult period for our Organization. The horrible attack on the United Nations offices in Baghdad on 19 August has highlighted the great risks that the United Nations staff faces while carrying out its humanitarian work in the field. The Secretary-General's plans to enhance the safety measures for United Nations personnel deserve the full support of the General Assembly.

We welcome the Secretary-General's call for reform and commit ourselves to engage vigorously in the debate and the search for timely solutions. Austria, hosting one of the headquarters of the United Nations, has a strong sense of responsibility for the effective and efficient functioning of the Organization. We are ready to work with all partners concerned to take up the reform proposals of the Secretary-General.

The reform of the Secretariat has made substantial and commendable progress under the leadership of Secretary-General. Austria welcomes this positive development, but still sees room for improvement.

At the same time, we, the Member States, must live up to our commitment for a more effective and efficient multilateralism.

The General Assembly is at the heart of the Organization as the universal body where every country is represented on an equal footing. It is unfortunate that this organ, which has substantially contributed to the creation of international norms and standards, has seen a decline in relevance. Repetitive and lengthy debates, as well as an overburdened agenda, impede its proper functioning. Austria therefore fully supports your efforts, Mr. President, to revitalize the Assembly.

The Economic and Social Council has also been criticized for not playing its role as the major guiding and coordinating body in the field of economic and social development. The revitalization of the Economic and Social Council through a review of its role and working methods is an area to which Austria also attaches great importance.

The composition of the Security Council is indeed at odds with the geopolitical realities of our century. It does not reflect the growing number of members or the necessary regional balance. Its decision-making process therefore is perceived by many as lacking legitimacy. In our view, this discussion is not only about who just be represented on the Council, but about ensuring that the decision-making therein is in the interests of world peace and global security. In this context, the regional groups must accept their responsibility in coming forward with solutions.

In concluding, I wish to express Austria's strong belief that the strengthening of the main organs of the United Nations will help to achieve the goals of the Millennium Declaration and will make the Organization better suited to meet future challenges.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): I am very pleased to address the Assembly on behalf of Canada, New Zealand and Australia under agenda items 10 and 60.

Our delegations wish, of course, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session, and we look forward very much to working with you in the year ahead. We want to thank the Secretary-General for his outstanding leadership of the Organization over the past year and for presenting these two reports to us today.

Our delegations applaud the Secretary-General for providing us with a great deal more than a progress report, important as such a report is. His report on the work of the Organization sets out the grave and momentous challenges facing the United Nations — and its membership — in these troubling times. He has also pointed to the Organization's successes, which are considerable even in a year as trying as the one just passed.

Our delegations wholeheartedly endorse the Secretary-General's message that multilateral institutions — especially the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council — must adapt to meet the challenges that we now face. If they do not, their marginalization is all but inevitable.

We welcomed the Secretary-General's announcement that he will create a panel to examine the policy challenges facing the Organization and the institutional structures needed to meet them effectively. Such an exercise is urgently needed, and it has our full support. We will look forward to receiving the Secretary-General's proposals next year.

Not least among the challenges facing the United Nations is the enormous suffering which brutal conflicts, particularly in Africa, are inflicting on countless numbers of civilians. It is not enough simply to urge Governments and rebel movements to comply with the most minimal standards of civilized behaviour, and then shrug helplessly when they fail to do so as thousands are raped, mutilated, tortured and murdered.

Robust international responses to suffering on such a scale cannot be precluded by narrow interpretations of sovereignty. The most fundamental duty of a State is to protect its own people. Where Governments cannot or will not protect their people from great harm, or are themselves the perpetrators of that harm, the responsibility to protect the people falls temporarily to the international community, acting through the Security Council. Likewise, perpetrators of such atrocities cannot be allowed to escape justice.

In this respect, all of us should share the Secretary-General's anticipation that the International Criminal Court will make a lasting contribution to the maintenance of peace and security, the promotion of the rule of law and respect for human rights.

States Members of the United Nations must do more to protect those whom we employ to work on our behalf. We urge all countries to become parties to the Convention for the Protection of United Nations and Associated Personnel, and to work to ensure that all situations in which United Nations and other associated personnel are engaged in peacekeeping, humanitarian and other related activities are adequately protected.

We do not wish to understate the importance of the other issues highlighted in the report. Among them we take special note of the need for concerted efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons; the threat to peace posed by terrorism; the risk of combating terrorism in a manner insensitive to human rights and due process of law; and the continuation of gross violations of human rights — often, most egregiously, against the rights of women. Further, we agree with the Secretary-General that more aggressive efforts are needed to prevent conflicts, to halt those which do occur, and to assist with the reconstruction of afflicted States.

In this context, we welcome the positive comments in the report on the valuable peacekeeping role which can be played by coalitions of the willing. In East Timor, the Congo and — most recently — Liberia, we have seen coalitions take the lead in stabilizing conflict situations. We wish to underline once more that all peacekeepers operating under a United Nations mandate should be fully recognized as such, whatever the colour of their helmets.

As the Secretary-General and the Security Council have acknowledged, effective regional action such as that undertaken in Solomon Islands by Australia, New Zealand and their partners in the Pacific Islands Forum can make a significant contribution to maintaining international peace and security, in full compliance with the Charter.

Our delegations also appreciate the Secretary-General's report on progress made in implementing the Millennium Development Goals. The eighth of the

Millennium Development Goals calls on the international community to build a global partnership for development. It recognizes that it will take more than aid to eradicate poverty.

In this context, the lack of progress at the World Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial meeting in Cancún is distressing. There is a profound contradiction here. We cannot, on the one hand, advocate achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and on the other, allow the trade barriers, subsidies and quotas — which undermine economic growth and help perpetuate poverty — to remain. Of particular concern are those barriers preventing and distorting agricultural trade. Those rotten structures must be dismantled, and we must get the Doha Round back on track.

The common message in the Secretary-General's reports is that the Organization must improve its institutional capacity — and Member States must show greater political will — if we are to fulfil the aspirations contained in the Charter in this increasingly complex and daunting international environment. Canada, New Zealand and Australia believe that the Secretary-General is right when he says that the Organization has reached a fork in the road. We call on all Member States to choose the road towards a more productive and effective multilateral system that can seriously address the problems facing us.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.